

Funding Assistance

Several funding programs are available to assist farms and residences who have wells to plug. Most funding is made available through the Michigan Department of Agriculture's Home*A*Syst and Farm*A*Syst programs.

Both of these programs offer financial and technical assistance. The programs request that you complete a survey. Upon completion of the survey, your property is ranked to determine funding priority. For some properties, programs are available to completely fund well pluggings.

For more information on funding and technical assistance, call the Barry Soil and Water Conservation District at 616-948-8056.



*Nashville Wellhead
Protection Team*

Plugging Abandoned Water Wells



Dangers of Abandoned Wells

Unplugged, abandoned wells are a safety and health threat. Abandoned wells provide a direct route to groundwater. If contaminants enter the well, it poses a serious health hazard to nearby drinking water wells.

Old wells were often incorrectly installed. These old wells can cause pesticides and bacteria to mix with groundwater that is used for drinking.

According to the National Groundwater Association, Michigan leads the nation in the number of new wells drilled annually.

If we don't make sure that abandoned wells have been properly plugged, new and existing wells are at risk of becoming contaminated.

Take the time to find out if you have an abandoned well on your property. If so, make sure it is properly plugged to protect the health and safety of your family.



What is an Abandoned Well?

An abandoned water well is typically:

1. Permanently out of use.
2. In poor condition so that it is no longer practical to use.
3. Uncompleted.

What Wells Must be Plugged?

1. Wells that are not being used.
2. Wells that are disconnected when the property is connected to municipal service.
3. Any broken or unused wells.

How do I Know if I Have an Abandoned Well?

1. Talk to people with historical knowledge of your property. Long-time area residents or former property owners are a great place to start.
2. Look for physical signs. These may be:
 - Abandoned wells may be dug wells of large diameter lined with brick or stones. Drilled or driven wells usually have a 2"-4" diameter metal casing.
 - Windmills or wishing wells.
 - Well casing above ground or through concrete floor.

- Circular concrete patch in floor.
 - Small outbuildings that may be a former wellhouse.
 - Hand pump or faucet in yard.
 - Damp, circular depression in yard.
 - Crock, brick or stone structures.
 - Manhole covers.
3. Check records at the Barry-Eaton County District Health Department. Local zoning records or building permits may also provide information on the location of the old well.

Who Can Plug a Well?

1. A property owner may only plug a well located on their own property. Help is available from the Barry Soil and Water Conservation District at 616-948-8056.
2. A registered well drilling contractor or their employee may plug a well.

The MDEQ recommends that property owners hire registered well drilling contractors to plug abandoned wells. Registered well drillers have the specialized training and equipment necessary to properly plug abandoned wells.